

Transportation

MOBILITY FOR THE 21ST CENTURY



El Paso's strategic location along the Camino Real, the oldest trade route in North America, is the foundation for the region's economic, social and cultural development. Today, El Paso's strategic location on the United States-Mexico border, its midpoint location between the Gulf of Mexico and the Pacific Ocean and its dominance continues to be a foundation which provides the City and the region with a unique opportunity to capitalize on both north-south and east-west trade movement.

El Paso's transportation system enables people to access employment, education, shopping, recreational, health care, housing, and cultural activities. Furthermore, the transportation system plays a crucial role in supporting the region's economy and quality of life. For El Paso, freight movement requires the development, coordination and integration of truck, rail, and air infrastructure to meet the needs of regional and international markets. In order to support this strategy, local projects such as the Inner Loop, the Northeast Bypass and the Border Highway Extension need to be implemented as detailed in the Transportation Projects map of **The Map Atlas**. With the implementation of the actions identified in the Transportation Section of *The Plan*, mobility to, from, and within El Paso may be improved and growth sustained up to and beyond the year 2025. The transportation system is a key element for improving the quality of life, opening access to new markets, maintaining access to current markets, and providing mobility for daily commute trips for the citizens of El Paso.

Roadway design and connectivity also influence mobility within the City of El Paso. For this reason the City has implemented the “Hierarchy of Arterial Streets” in the Subdivision Ordinance to ensure that roadway construction and reconstruction meet design requirements in order to maintain and improve mobility of all modes of transportation (See Figure 6.1). The transportation system for the City of El Paso must include the connectivity of the arterial street system, sidewalks, bike paths, bike routes, and mass transit. All of these elements must be linked to have a seamless transportation system throughout the City.

Transportation has been and continues to be the cornerstone of development in El Paso. The transportation system is vital for the development, economic vitality and mobility for the City of El Paso and the adjoining region. By strengthening the regional transportation system, the City will not only facilitate economic development, but will also promote connectivity at the local level. Connectivity is defined as the ability of the transportation network to provide for an adequate number of alternate routes in order to reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT). Strengthening connectivity, modal linkages, and intermodal access, as well as mitigating adverse impacts of trade growth, including traffic congestion, air pollution, and vehicle delays at grade crossings are important factors which *The Plan* must address. Key elements of *The Plan* therefore include: (1) air quality conformity; (2) urban transportation; (3) international transportation; (4) mass transit; (5) bicycles and pedestrians; (6) airports; and, (7) railroads.

Air Quality Conformity

The Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 require the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the transportation planning agency for the El Paso region (which includes the County of El Paso and the City of Sunland Park, New Mexico), to demonstrate that projects, investments, and strategies implemented by the City of El Paso, as well as surrounding cities, are consistent with air quality objectives contained in the State Implementation Plan (SIP). Proposed transportation projects for the entire region must be included in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), the twenty year, long range plan for the region. In order for projects contained in this plan to receive federal funding, the El Paso MPO must demonstrate that the plan conforms to the SIP to improve air quality in El Paso.

Below: Air pollution.



Although air quality in El Paso has improved significantly since the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) designated this region as a non-attainment area in 1990, the area faces major air quality challenges as the population and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) continue to increase. The growing population leads to an increase in VMT resulting in more vehicle emissions and air pollution. Increased trips by motor vehicles, increased travel time, and congestion at the ports-of-entry contribute to deteriorating the environmental quality of El

Paso. The policies and actions outlined in this section utilize a wide range of strategies to achieve reduction in mobile source emissions. It is anticipated that implementing these and other policies and actions throughout *The Plan*, will significantly reduce auto emissions and increase substantial gains in quality of life issues.

GOAL: IMPROVE AIR QUALITY BY PROMOTING ENERGY EFFICIENT TRANSPORTATION.

POLICY: Implement land use and transportation solutions that offer the best opportunity to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT), conserve energy, and protect the environment.

POLICY: Establish partnerships to implement innovative transportation strategies which help reduce traffic delay and vehicle miles traveled (VMT).

The City should work to establish public/private partnerships with employers in order to establish and implement innovative transportation methods (i.e. carpooling, flex time, light rail). These partnerships would support various strategies which could help to reduce the number of vehicles on the road and thus minimize traffic congestion and VMT.

POLICY: Seek, recognize and reward the use of alternative fuels, energy-efficient modes, and other environmentally-sound technologies.

POLICY: Coordinate with governmental and institutional agencies on air quality responsibilities.

POLICY: Utilize strategies and programs identified in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and the Congestion Management System (CMS).

POLICY: Increase participation from the general public and cooperation from employers in addressing urban sprawl.

ACTION: Adopt a phased annexation plan to reduce increases in VMT and mobile source emissions.

There is a direct relationship between transportation and the increases in ozone, CO (Carbon Monoxide), and PM-10 (particulate matter-10) pollutants. Mobile source emissions (emissions from motor vehicles) are the main source for CO (92%), PM-10 (52%), and Volatile Organic Compounds (58%). Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) are an ozone precursor meaning that VOCs and NO_x (Nitrogen Oxide), in the presence of sunlight, forms ozone. If El Paso is to attain the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) established in 1991, vehicle emissions must be reduced.

ACTION: Plan transportation infrastructure and services to support compact, transit oriented land development supporting multimodal transportation.

ACTION: Encourage redevelopment and infill development integrating mixed land uses and higher densities to support mass transit and to reduce VMT.

ACTION: Provide efficient multimodal connections for a comprehensive road network.

ACTION: Implement strategies such as carpooling, mass transit improvements, and alternative work schedules, including flex time, to reduce peak hour traffic congestion and delay.

ACTION: Create a permanent program that converts fleet vehicles to cleaner burning fuels.

ACTION: Educate the public, especially youth, about the individual and societal benefits of alternatives to cars.

Urban Transportation System



Traffic congestion on roadways has been identified as the most prominent problem facing El Paso's transportation system. Increased commercial and industrial activity, a burgeoning population, and land development lacking alternative modes of transportation has led to the dominant use of the single occupancy vehicle (SOV). Similarly, national trends show an increase in urban traffic congestion resulting in the degradation of air quality, increased traffic accidents, and unacceptable driving conditions and delays. History has shown that we cannot build ourselves out of congestion, so we must develop and

implement diverse solutions to better manage our urban roadways. The following goals and policies address these issues and, when coupled with the goals and policies of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan and the Congestion Management Plan, promote sustainable development.

GOAL: MEET THE CURRENT AND FUTURE MOBILITY NEEDS OF RESIDENTS, BUSINESSES, AND VISITORS WITH A SAFE, EFFICIENT, AND MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM.

POLICY: Implement Congestion Management System (CMS) strategies to achieve maximum efficiency of the current transportation network.

The Congestion Management System (CMS) is prepared by the MPO and specifically addresses the issue of traffic congestion for the El Paso urban area. The CMS identifies the causes and locations of congestion, both current and future, and evaluates strategies leading to improved mobility, air quality and a more efficient transportation system. These strategies include: (1) encouraging the development of alternative modes to the Single Occupant Vehicle (SOV) for reducing traffic congestion throughout the El Paso Urban Transportation Study (EPUTS) area; (2) enhancing the connectivity of the network such as prioritizing projects which provide for alternative routes or through the construction of grade separations, and (3) establishing a priority maintenance list utilizing the Pavement Management Information Systems (PMIS) to help ensure preservation of the existing transportation system.

POLICY: Support planning initiatives which improve connectivity and mobility through the development of transportation alternatives.

POLICY: Require the development of thoroughfares which provide connectivity and support multimodal transportation.

POLICY: Develop access management strategies to increase mobility and reduce vehicular emissions.

Access management strategies include the limitation and/or reduction of curb cuts onto major or minor arterials which cause delays in traffic along these roadways. Shared driveways and turn bays also increase mobility and help create a safer and more efficient traffic flow. By implementing such strategies, vehicular emissions can be reduced and traffic safety increased.

POLICY: Provide convenient intermodal connections between all elements of the regional transportation system (transit, rail, surface, air) to achieve a seamless travel network.

POLICY: Encourage public/private partnerships to identify and implement CMS strategies which improve access to commercial centers, regional facilities and international ports-of-entry.

CMS strategies which address these issues include: (1) prioritizing projects in the 1996 Truck Route Study identified as needing improvements to carry trucks to commercial centers; (2) identifying strategic arterials which enhance access to international border crossings, airports, intermodal transportation facilities and major freight distribution routes; and, (3) prioritizing roadways on the National Highway System where the CMS identifies improvements are necessary.

POLICY: Support and promote commute trip reduction (CTR) programs, telecommuting, electronic communications, variable work weeks, flextime, and a variety of travel demand strategies.

Commute trip reduction programs provide flexibility in work week schedules which can reduce traffic congestion during peak commute times. Such programs also reduce the number of vehicles which need to be on the road by allowing people to work from home rather than drive to work everyday. The variance in schedules and the reduction of vehicles on the road decreases vehicle emissions and vehicle miles traveled thus increasing air quality and maximizing the efficiency of the transportation network.

ACTION: Prioritize projects along congested corridors, as identified in the CMS.



Above: El Paso Street corridor.

Figure 6.1: Hierarchy of Arterial Streets

Freeway:

Freeways shall be designed to move large volumes of traffic across cities and shall have controlled access to the main lanes. Some portions of the freeway may have frontage roads. Access to the freeway system shall be gained at interchanges, which are generally spaced at two-mile intervals. The right-of-way varies from 200 to 400 feet with traffic lanes and emergency lanes in each direction and separated by a safety median.

Expressway:

Expressways shall be designed to provide high volumes of urban traffic at high operating speed and mobility and; service area is the city. Roadway access may be limited to other expressways, highways, or arterials at approved interchanges. The right-of-way shall vary from 200-300 feet with traffic lanes and emergency lanes in each direction separated by a safety median. Interchanges may be required at designated intersections and spaced at a minimum of two miles apart.

Super Arterial:

Super arterials shall provide access and interconnect major activity centers, and shall move large volumes of traffic through planning areas. The design of a super arterial shall minimize intersecting streets, and shall reduce allowable median cuts. Heavy truck traffic shall be directed to this arterial. The total right-of-way for the super arterial shall be 136 feet without bike lanes and 146 feet with bike lanes.

Major Arterial:

Major arterials shall provide access to commercial and some residential land uses. Major arterials shall be designed to permit through traffic and access to multifamily and light commercial uses and shall move traffic within a community. No direct access to low density residential shall be allowed. The total right-of-way width for major arterials shall be 110 feet without bike lanes and 120 feet with bike lanes.

Minor Arterial:

Minor arterials shall be designed to permit through traffic and access to multifamily and light commercial uses and shall move traffic from one neighborhood to another. No direct access to low density residential shall be allowed. The total right-of-way width for a minor arterial shall be 76 feet with no bike lanes and 84 feet with bike lanes.

Collector Arterial:

Collector arterials shall provide access to neighborhood commercial and residential land uses and shall distribute traffic from local streets to arterials. Collector arterial streets shall be designed to permit through traffic and access to multifamily and light commercial uses, as well as direct access to low density residential. The right-of-way width for collector arterial streets shall be 64 feet without bike lanes and 72 feet with bike lanes.

Major residential access street:

A major residential access street is intended to carry more traffic than a minor residential access street and shall provide at a minimum an acceptable environment for a residential neighborhood. The total right-of-way width for a major residential access street shall be 44 feet.

Minor residential access street:

A minor residential access street is intended to primarily carry traffic from within the subdivision, and shall provide the safest environment for a residential neighborhood. The total right-of-way width for a minor residential access street shall be 36 feet.

The CMS for El Paso begins with three broad concepts for reducing traffic congestion: (1) managing the existing and future transportation system; (2) managing travel demand; and, (3) construction of new or expanded facilities to reduce bottlenecks or provide system connectivity. Within these concepts, the CMS lists nine objectives, which, if met, would effectively improve the overall flow on highways and arterials and enhance other modes of transportation.

- ACTION:** Implement the Hierarchy of Arterial Streets as identified in the Subdivision Ordinance (see Figure 6.1).
- ACTION:** Require developers to participate in the costs of infrastructure improvements to the extent allowed by law.
- ACTION:** Limit and/or reduce curb cuts onto major or minor arterials to maintain the efficiency and safety of the arterial system.
- ACTION:** Require right turn bays at all major/major, major/minor and other higher classified arterial intersections to improve the flow of traffic.
- ACTION:** Develop and implement ordinances requiring businesses to build shared driveways incorporating accel/decel lanes, bus pull-out lanes and parking behind businesses.
- ACTION:** Develop a public dialogue and seek broad public support for the implementation of congestion pricing strategies to reduce inefficient travel behavior and manage travel demand.

Congestion pricing strategies include: (1) continuing with the ½ cent sales tax dedicated for public transportation, collecting tolls for the Stanton and Zaragoza Bridges, and charging fees for vehicle registration and inspection/maintenance programs; (2) continuing to include congestion pricing as alternative strategies in Major Investment Studies (MIS); (3) reviewing the feasibility of implementing a Regional Transit Authority to improve transportation throughout the entire region; and, (4) reviewing the toll structure of all the ports-of-entry to distribute traffic more evenly and to reduce delays.

- ACTION:** Initiate and support public awareness campaigns that focus attention on the societal, environmental and financial impacts of travel.

Below: Traffic at the Bridge of the Americas.



International Transportation

As a border community, the linkages between the United States and Mexico are important not only at the local level, but at an international level as well. Providing the necessary infrastructure to enhance these linkages to benefit many sectors of the community is important. An international long range Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) would be a logical venue for El Paso/Juarez to begin addressing transportation issues jointly. While no current avenues exist to pursue and enforce planning initiatives across international

boundaries, a cooperative effort at the local level is vital to create a comprehensive transportation network in the entire metro area. The corridor to Las Cruces, New Mexico should be included in this initiative which would, in essence, become a bi-national, bi-state MTP. This coordination is vital in order to link connections to destinations on both sides of the border. The Transportation Projects Map, included in the **Map Atlas of The Plan**, includes several projects which would benefit the area.

GOAL: **DEVELOP AN INTEGRATED SHORT AND LONG-RANGE PLAN THAT ENHANCES INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY.**

POLICY: **Utilize strategies and programs identified in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and the Congestion Management System.**

In the few years since ratification, the North American Free Trade Agreement has had a significant impact on the transportation system of the El Paso region. Trade through the El Paso ports-of-entry has increased from \$18.4 billion in 1994 to \$24 billion in 1997. An increase in trade-related industries such as trucking and manufacturing has also affected transportation in the EPUTS area. The MTP 2020 proposes several transportation improvements to address the increasing demands placed on the system by NAFTA-related activities. Improving access across the international border and enhancing the border arterial and highway system are key recommendations. Other strategies include constructing dedicated commuter and high-occupancy lanes on the international bridges, and hiring additional federal inspectors at the ports-of-entry to reduce delays.

POLICY: **Improve international mass transit.**

International mass transit is another area requiring cross-border cooperation. A successful example is the Border Jumper which originates from the El Paso Tourist and Convention Center and is designed to shuttle tourists to the City Market and other attractions in Mexico. Similar programs originating in Mexico are needed, especially in the downtown corridors. But it is in the area of commuter traffic that implementation of an international mass transit strategy could have the greatest benefits. The ultimate goal is to reduce the number of single occupancy vehicles (SOV) to relieve congestion, reduce wait times and reduce air pollution. Parking facilities on both sides of the border might serve as park-and-ride facilities where commuters in either direction could board an international transit vehicle for the trip across the border. Specific international routes originating in established transit centers in both communities could allow many commuters to leave the car at home altogether.

POLICY: **Support the establishment of a coordinating agency to manage, develop and maintain existing and future ports-of-entry.**

POLICY: **Encourage the Federal, State and local government to adequately staff the ports-of-entry, review and modify existing border crossing procedures and implement new technologies to reduce delay.**

ACTION: **Construct an international intermodal transportation facility to serve regional needs.**

ACTION: **Develop international mass transit alternatives.**

While the concept of light rail for El Paso is being considered, Ciudad Juarez is moving forward

with its plans to implement a light rail system. The potential to alleviate traffic congestion, improve air quality and stimulate economic growth are intrinsic benefits to a international light rail system. The existing high residential and employment densities around both Central Business Districts, combined with the existing high level of transit ridership, create a successful environment for an international light rail network. As the growth from NAFTA and the proposed Free Trade Zone of the Americas continues, greater economic and workforce ties with increased international commutes can be expected. The **Map Atlas** contains an alternative for a potential light rail system in El Paso.

- ACTION:** Enhance approaches to existing international crossings.
- ACTION:** Establish a coordinating agency to manage the development and maintenance of the ports-of-entry and facilitate the movement of people.
- ACTION:** Construct additional ports-of-entry to improve connectivity, meet projected traffic demand and reduce traffic congestion.
- ACTION:** Construct high-occupancy vehicle lanes (HOV) and dedicated commuter lanes (DCL) to reduce the use of the single occupant vehicle across the ports-of-entry.
- ACTION:** Develop an action plan to implement an international fixed guideway system connecting El Paso and Ciudad Juarez, Mexico.

Mass Transit

The City of El Paso faces unique challenges to promote and develop mass transit as a daily form of transportation. The community needs cost-efficient transportation not only for shopping and recreation, but also to provide service as a means of traveling to and from work. Mobility for the El Paso region depends on adequate, affordable public transportation that is efficient enough to serve as an alternative to the automobile. Alternative forms of transportation (other than cars), such as expanded bus service or fixed guideway systems, are crucial for improving mobility and air quality for the area. While still providing service for the transit dependent, mass transit should meet the needs of the non-transit dependent.



Above: Mass transit terminal.



Above: Mass transit at UTEP.

Before mass transit can become effective as a means of daily transportation, land development trends need to change. High-density residential and commercial development combined with pedestrian/bike connections are needed to make transit convenient for its customers. The policies and actions developed for mass transit are designed to encourage use by increasing the potential for ridership, improving the connections to transit, increasing mass transit options, and enhancing transit facilities. It is anticipated that within these concepts mass transit can become a viable means of transportation for daily trips.

GOAL: **DEVELOP A PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM THAT FACILITATES A GREATER USE OF TRANSIT, WHILE IMPROVING MOBILITY, AND REDUCING CONGESTION AND VEHICULAR EMISSIONS.**

According to the 1994 El Paso Travel Survey, 82% of El Pasoans commute to work in a single occupant vehicle. With per capita incomes at 59% of the national average, the community needs cost-efficient transportation not only for shopping and recreation, but for going to and from work. Mobility for the El Paso region depends on adequate, affordable public transportation that is efficient enough to serve as an alternative to the automobile. Alternative forms of transportation (other than cars), such as expanded bus service and light rail, are crucial in addressing congestion and air quality concerns for the area. See the **Map Atlas** for a conceptual route for a light rail system for the region.

POLICY: **Support the development of land use strategies which enhance mass transit as a viable means of transportation.**

POLICY: **Encourage the development of transportation services which enhance both inter-city and intra-city connections.**

POLICY: **Provide safe, attractive, and accessible bus stops throughout the City.**

POLICY: **Support mass transit alternatives, including fixed guideway systems, which would enhance the current transit system to provide long-term traffic congestion relief.**

ACTION: **Implement mass transit strategies which improve the efficiency of inter-city and intra-city transit services to increase ridership.**

ACTION: **Support the development of Central Business District transit improvements**

and service to reduce downtown traffic congestion and to support redevelopment.

- ACTION:** Implement a marketing program to encourage the use of public transportation, including transit terminals, park-and-ride lots, express buses and special or international event buses.
- ACTION:** Require bus pull-out lanes, park-and-ride lots, and transit service for major commercial and residential developments.
- ACTION:** Integrate bus stops into the subdivision plat review process.
- ACTION:** Link sidewalks, bike trails and bike routes with transit stops.
- ACTION:** Develop an action plan to implement a fixed guideway system.

Below: *Bicycle trail.*



Bicycles and Pedestrians

Many of El Paso's natural characteristics are conducive for bicycling including a mild climate, young population, and a significant number of people who view bicycle riding as a sound alternative to the automobile. Bicycles are an efficient and affordable form of transportation that, with increased use and coordination with transit, could help to relieve traffic congestion, improve air quality, improve the quality of life, and promote good health.

Walking trips account for almost 12% of all trips made in El Paso. It is apparent that the development and maintenance of the sidewalk system is necessary to meet the needs of the

citizens of El Paso. A well planned, identifiable pedestrian/bike system coordinated with transit access is needed to increase safety and to increase use.

- GOAL:** DEVELOP A BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN INFRASTRUCTURE THAT FUNCTIONS AS PART OF THE URBAN TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM.
- POLICY:** Increase bicycle, pedestrian and transit access in land development ordinances and conceptual plans.
- POLICY:** Enhance pedestrian and bicycling mobility for commuting, recreation and other trip purposes.

POLICY: Create multimodal centers encouraging the use of public transit, bicycling and walking.

POLICY: Support the continued development and implementation of a regional bikeway plan to improve quality of life.

The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991 mandated Metropolitan Planning Organizations to develop transportation facilities, including bicycle and pedestrian facilities, that function as a seamless intermodal transportation system. Emphasis was placed on the development of these facilities to interact with other transportation modes to foster their development as part of daily commuter traffic. In the El Paso metropolitan region, a viable bicycle network could bring many benefits to the community with one of the most important being an “alternative” to the automobile. The Long Range Transportation Plan’s 2015 Bicycle Element set forth goals to meet the intent of ISTEA by broadening transportation planning to include bicycle elements into the El Paso transportation network. A Regional Bikeways Plan study with the aim of increasing bicycle use and safety was completed (see **Map Atlas**).

POLICY: Provide access routes for persons with disabilities and special needs to transit facilities, public facilities, social services, and commercial districts.

POLICY: Require bicycle parking facilities in community facilities, shopping centers and educational institutions.

POLICY: Coordinate design of pedestrian, bicycling and disabled use facilities with user groups.

ACTION: Construct bike trails and provide bike routes in designated areas.

ACTION: Construct and maintain sidewalks to provide connectivity and reduce the number of pedestrian accidents throughout the City.

ACTION: Link sidewalks, bike trails and bike routes with transit facilities.

ACTION: Incorporate sidewalks, bike trails and bike routes when concept plans and subdivision plats are submitted.

In March, 1997, the City of El Paso adopted a new Subdivision Ordinance that states, “sidewalks shall be required on all planned local and arterial streets in order to provide direct access to residences, schools, public recreational facilities, and commercial and retail facilities as part of a pedestrian circulation system.” This change in the ordinance will assist the MPO’s efforts toward the construction of safe and convenient pedestrian walkways within El Paso.

ACTION: Implement a safety program for bicyclists and motorists to eliminate bike/traffic conflicts.

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- ACTION:** Construct bicycle parking facilities in public places, shopping and education centers.
- ACTION:** Develop and maintain safe, identifiable pedestrian/bike crossings on arterial streets.
- ACTION:** Investigate traffic calming techniques to reinforce safety in pedestrian zones.

Traffic calming is a term used for a wide range of actions used to reduce the negative effects of motor vehicles and improve the environment for other modes of transportation. Traffic calming causes motorists to drive more slowly or select another route. Methods of traffic calming include but are not limited to the use of lights, medians, speed bumps, entrance treatments, landscaping and lane narrowing.



Above: Airport activity.

Airports

The airport system for the El Paso region includes the El Paso International Airport (EPIA), Biggs Army Airfield, the West Texas Airport, the Fabens Airport, Santa Teresa Airport and Abraham Gonzales International Airport in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. The EPIA is located on the east/central side of El Paso and serves much of southern New Mexico and West Texas as well as the northern part of the State of Chihuahua, Mexico. The EPIA is currently making capital improvements so that it may improve both passenger and freight service. The Biggs Army Airfield, which is owned and operated by the U.S. Army, is located adjacent to the EPIA and just north of the Butterfield Industrial Park.

Because of the proximity of the EPIA and Biggs Airfield to the various industrial areas, access is a critical issue. The policies and actions identified for airports are designed to improve the efficient movement of people and goods throughout El Paso. Compatible land use and improved access will help develop the intermodal infrastructure needed to support the region and a regional transportation hub.

- GOAL:** MAXIMIZE THE USE OF AIRPORTS AS INTERMODAL ELEMENTS TO ENHANCE THE EFFICIENT AND SAFE MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE AND GOODS.
- POLICY:** Coordinate the development of airport infrastructure with intermodal facilities and compatible land uses.
- POLICY:** Support development improving access to and service within airport land.

ACTION: Build new transportation facilities that improve access to airports.

ACTION: Improve intermodal connections to airport terminals.

Railroads

Trains have been an integral part of the El Paso transportation system since the first rail line came to El Paso in 1881. Increases in freight train movement from throughout the United States and from the interior of Mexico combined with higher traffic volumes in the city have created additional conflicts at grade-level railroad crossings and at rail freight transfer facilities. Because of the role rail plays on the El Paso economy, it is important to have an efficient, safe and integrated rail system.

The policies and actions for railroads in *The Plan* are designed to reduce train/vehicle conflicts in order to provide for a safe and more efficient rail system. The idea is to coordinate rail with other modes of transportation, improve access to markets, and eliminate conflicts by relocating to an area outside of the inner city. The construction of grade-separated rail crossing combined with eliminating at-grade crossings will help provide long-term relief of train/vehicle conflicts.

GOAL: DEVELOP A SAFE AND EFFICIENT RAIL SYSTEM THAT IS INTEGRATED WITH OTHER MODES OF TRANSPORTATION.

POLICY: Coordinate the development of railroad infrastructure with intermodal facilities and compatible land uses.

Below: Union Pacific Railyard.



POLICY: Support rail safety by eliminating traffic conflicts at grade-level street crossings.

POLICY: Promote commercial and passenger rail service between El Paso and other cities.

POLICY: Acquire vacated railroad right-of-way for other transportation uses.

ACTION: Increase safety and educational programs to reduce the potential for train/vehicle or train/pedestrian accidents.

ACTION: Construct additional grade-separated rail crossings combined with adjacent at-grade crossings to reduce train/vehicle conflicts.

ACTION: Enhance rail service and facilities to attract increased ridership.

ACTION: Relocate rail yards to the periphery of the City to reduce train/truck traffic from the inner city.